



THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY

1230 YORK AVENUE NEW YORK, NY 10021

February 18, 1983

JOSHUA LEDERBERG  
PRESIDENT

Dr. Orville G. Brim, Jr.  
February 18, 1983

- 2 -

↓  
I would be glad to have the opportunity for you to meet  
Dr. Kappas and to discuss the matter more generally with us.

With best regards.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg

Dr. Orville G. Brim, Jr.  
Foundation for Child Development  
345 East 46th Street  
New York, New York 10017

Dear Bert:

I know that pediatrics is not exactly in the main line of your Foundation but I did want to call a special situation to your attention.

Neonatal jaundice is one of the most prevalent sources of overt brain damage and mental retardation syndromes, especially among low birth weight children. An unanswered question is whether insidious "subclinical" exposure may be causing milder impairments of even larger numbers of children but it is hard to justify a negative answer. Our obliviousness about this may be one of the great sleepers of future medical controversy. Dr. Kappas here has developed an exciting approach to dealing with this problem, which is detailed in the enclosed publication.

There are two levels at which I would try to elicit your interest: 1) the most substantive, how to get support for continuing the clinical studies that might help to validate this procedure and 2) more broadly the policy challenges beyond the very near certainty that this will end up being another "orphan" drug. A couple of pharmaceutical companies have already hinted that they really do not dare touch it: an intervention for kids who have a high likelihood of coming out damaged anyhow! They would then be sitting targets for litigation. Surprisingly many pediatricians are confident about the feasibility of the clinical trials. The policy aspects of that problem, as well as the actual substance of the research affect the healthy development of many, many children.